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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
Second session
Geneva, 18 March-5 (or 12) April 1991
Item 1 of the provisional agenda*

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Letter dated 31 December 1990 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 43/222 B, the Committee on Conferences is entrusted with the responsibility of determining the ways and means that might ensure the optimum utilization of conference facilities, including documentation, and to monitor the implementation of all General Assembly resolutions on the organization and servicing of, and documentation for, conferences and meetings. Many recommendations from the Committee have been adopted as General Assembly resolutions aimed at improving the efficient and effective use of the conferences resources available. The most recent resolution of the Assembly on this subject, resolution 45/238 A reads, in part, as follows:

> 5. Notes the efforts made by a number of United Nations organs to improve the utilization of conference-servicing resources;
>
> 6. Invites United Nations bodies, in making requests for conference services in accordance with their respective mandates to ensure that the conference services requested are sufficient to enable them to carry out their tasks fully and match, to the extent possible, their actual requirements;

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7. Urges all United Nations organs and bodies to intensify their efforts to improve their utilization of requested conference-servicing resources;

As I am sure you will appreciate, the intent of this resolution, and those that preceded it, is to assist United Nations organs in making the best use possible of the conference-servicing resources provided to them without adversely affecting the successful work of the organs in question. This can be accomplished through a variety of means, such as eliminating as far as possible avoidable cancellations of meetings, and the scheduling of informal consultations with interpretation services.

One way of reducing the number of avoidable cancellations would be to establish a timetable for the session based on past practices and patterns of the Committee as well as on the anticipated need for time for informal consultations or for processing of in-session documentation. It is also important to note that if the Secretariat is informed well in advance of cancellations, this increases the possibility of reassignment of conference-servicing resources to other bodies wishing to meet.

In view of the high importance accorded to the question of the improved utilization of conference-servicing resources, the General Assembly, in operative paragraphs 9 and 10 of resolution 45/238 A requested the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences and the Secretary-General to maintain their contacts with all United Nations organs in order to ensure the most efficient and effective use of conference services allocated to them, and requested the Chairmen of United Nations organs to bring the concerns about the utilization of conference-servicing resources to the attention of the organs concerned.

Accordingly, I would like to request you to note the suggestions made and to inform the Preparatory Committee of the contents of this letter as well as of the relevant portions of resolution 45/238 A of 21 December 1990.

(Signed) Jaime BAZAN
Chairman
Committee on Conferences